

ABANDONED HOUSING PROJECTS IN MALAYSIA: SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP AS A PANACEA FOR INSECURITY CHALLENGES IN NORTHERN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

The myriad of problems facing Northern Nigeria, especially high poverty incidence, illiteracy, economic inequality, and conflicts cannot be adequately overcome by the government alone. There is the urgent need for an alternative community intervention mechanism to compliment government's efforts in confronting social problems on sustainable basis. Today, Social Entrepreneurship is considered critical in achieving vital socio-economic objectives in nations worldwide. Unfortunately, the subject has not received adequate attention in academic and policy discussions in Nigeria. This paper, therefore, is aimed at examining the concept of Social Entrepreneurship in the Nigerian context and also shows how innovative social interventions have assisted in reducing the menace of insecurity problems in Northern Nigeria. The analysis conducted in the paper has benefitted extensively from contemporary literature on the subject, observations and interviews with members of three community organisations in northern Nigeria. Accordingly, the paper found that social entrepreneurship has not been fully understood in Nigeria, even though the activities of social groups have tremendously help in reducing the problem of insecurity bedeviling the region. The community organisations observed lacked proper organisation, funding and capacity. With better enlightenment and sensitisation, coupled with improved capacity to generate and manage funding, community organisations will be in better position to augment government's initiative in restoring peace and security in the northern Nigeria.

Keywords: Social entrepreneurship, insecurity, northern Nigeria, nonprofits, terrorism

INTRODUCTION

Many developing countries are faced with increasing economic inequality, famine, illiteracy, inadequate healthcare and infrastructural facilities coupled with unemployment and high poverty incidence. The myriad of these problems led to various forms of safety and security challenges many of which cannot be resolved by the government alone. Northern Nigeria, particularly the North East, has been badly hit by insurgency that is being attributed to some of the socio-economic challenges that engulfed the region for a long time (Salaudeen, 2013). The current violence emanating from the Northeast perpetrated by the activities of Boko-Haram sect caused wanton destruction of lives and

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property in many parts of Nigeria. Ironically, the youth, which constitutes a very significant portion of the population, were easily recruited by violent groups and other elements to achieve their self-centred political or economic interests. This trend can hardly be addressed without concerted efforts to re-orient and economically engage the youth and other vulnerable members of the society.

It is against this backdrop that the establishment of community/social organisations with the aim of uniquely understanding and resolving social challenges are gaining prominence world over. This makes enquiries into the concept of social entrepreneurship imperative. Although social entrepreneurship is a relatively new concept, it is increasingly gaining considerable research interests and resources by international organizations, world-class universities, governments, public agencies, private corporations (Dees, 2007; Chell, Nicolopoulou, & Karatas-Özkan, 2010). Because of this increased acknowledgement, social entrepreneurship has now evolved into a global phenomenon (Nicholls, 2008; Jiao, 2011). This trend gained prominence because governments world over have limited capacity and resources to resolve the major social challenges. This is even more so for countries like Nigeria where the government has not been forthcoming in overcoming socio-economic problems of the nation due to poor governance and misallocation of resources and confused priorities. This paper is, therefore, aimed at examining the social organisations in Nigeria with the primary aim of addressing the security challenges facing Northern Nigeria in particular, and the country in general. This will help greatly in better understanding the challenges faced by these organisations and how they can be better organised to achieve their objectives of drastically reducing the current insecurity in the country.

THE CONCEPT OF SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Social entrepreneurship is a new emerging field challenged by competing definitions, gaps in research literature, and limited empirical data (Mair & Marti, 2006; Nicholls, 2006). However, Dacin, Dacin and Matear (2010) have identified no less than 37 different definitions to social entrepreneurship. Principally, Entrepreneurship is the process that results in the creation of economic and social value as people and organisations search for opportunities (Drucker, 1985). In this sense, social entrepreneurship promotes opportunity discovery leading to positive social change. (Mair and Marti; 2006, Ashoka; 2011). Specifically, Roberts and Woods (2005) describe social entrepreneurship as a construct that bridges business and benevolence by applying entrepreneurship in the social sphere. Thus, a common denominator in explaining social entrepreneurship is societal value creation through innovation (Austin, Stevenson, & WeiSkillern, 2006; Lepoutre et al., 2011. Alvord et al (2004) insist that social entrepreneurship could be a veritable means for alleviating social problems and catalyze social transformation. This explains why social entrepreneurs do not pursue economic goals rather they build social organization that produces public goods (Thomson et al 2000; Leadbeater, 1997). Today, social entrepreneurs are increasingly realizing opportunities to meet the unmet needs of global communities in different ways (Zahra et al 2008; Zahra et al, 2009).

The scope of social entrepreneurship is very broad but scholars have attempted to come up with three different types of social entrepreneurship namely: private social entrepreneurship, non-profit social entrepreneurship and public sector social entrepreneurship (Roper and Cheney, 2005).

- i. **Private social entrepreneurship:** working within the private sector gives social entrepreneurs an advantage in terms of the orientation towards planning, profit and innovation. The private social entrepreneurs do not necessarily set up purely social enterprises, but they embed social values into their businesses (Roper &

Cheney, 2005). The private social entrepreneur targets profit but at the same time uses part of their profits to solve social problems by way of corporate social responsibility.

- ii. **Social entrepreneurship in the not-for-profit sector:** The not-for-profit sector is the most fertile source for social entrepreneurship and in fact social entrepreneurship has been going on in this sector for a long time and is partly spurred on by the increased competition for funding resources (Leadbeater, 1997; Roper & Cheney, 2005). Furthermore, non-profit organisations that implement an entrepreneurial approach are less hesitant to implement concepts and practices from marketing, strategic planning and systems in order to analyze and control costs (Roper & Cheney, 2005). This is because they obtain most of their funds from philanthropic sources. They therefore pay little attention to adopting approaches that could lead them to controlling costs.
- iii. **Public-sector social entrepreneurship:** Social entrepreneurship in the public sector has been encouraged by the public sector and managers and workers looking for new ways of delivering welfare services (Leadbeater, 1997). Social entrepreneurs in the public sector face challenges in the likes of a difficulty to adapt to change due to constitutional, executive and legislative considerations (Roper & Cheney, 2005). Public sector social entrepreneurs focus on delivering welfare services mainly to alleviate the suffering of others.

Irrespective of the type of social entrepreneurship adopted, the bottom-line remains that social entrepreneurs discover social problems and uniquely approach them with renewed approach and social capital. In many countries, especially, low income nations, insecurity is a major concern. The problems continue to degenerate due to weak institutions and poor governance which are associated with the public sector.

ISSUES ON SECURITY

The concept of security can be viewed from two different perspectives: national and individual perspectives. From the national perspective, security is the requirement to maintain the survival of the state through the use of economic, diplomatic, and political powers in order to maintain internal cohesion and corporate existence of the state and its ability to maintain its vital institutions for the promotion of its core values, socio-political and economic objectives (Imobigwe, 2003 as cited in Efe, 2014). Effective national security ensures that crime rate, anti social vices resulting from high rate of unemployment and gross restiveness are arrested through job creation and acquisition of the right skills (Efe, 2014). Where national security framework could not provide basic requirements for maintaining social order, insecurity ensues.

From the individual perspective, security refers to issues relating to job security, social security, food security, and security against natural and manmade disasters (Atoyebi, 2001, cited in Efe, 2014). Where individuals could not meet these essential elements of security they tend to feel unsecured. Generally, from the national and individual perspectives, security has to do with protection, preservation and safeguard of human life, health, justice and liberty. This means that security is a protection against criminal activities such as terrorism, kidnapping, stealing, robbery, killings, and riots, among others. Today, an average Nigeria is faced with increasing incidences of insecurity making the living condition of people unpleasant and volatile. Insecurity in Nigeria is more prevalence in the north east due to senseless activities of Boko-Haram sect.

This notwithstanding, there are many factors responsible for insecurity in Nigeria. Some of these causes, according to Efe (2014), include but not limited to: unemployment, poverty, corruption, lack of basic infrastructure and lack of education. Also, Ajufu (2013) identifies unavailability of job opportunities among youth as major factor responsible for youth restiveness and other social vices such as armed robbery, destitution and political thuggery. Unemployment causes poverty and poverty, in turns deprives people of access to quality education, good health care systems, food and nutrition. Stewart (2005) confirms that most conflicts in Africa are mainly propelled by the impulse of the deprived group to resist the perceived injustice and oppressive tendencies of the dominant group or the ruling elite.

Terrorism is the major security challenge in Nigeria. Therefore a proper understanding of the root-cause of increasing terrorism in Nigeria must include both economic and socio-psychological dimensions. In Nigeria, unemployment and poverty seem to have less influence on terrorism than religions and cultural ideological believe (Ogundiya, 2009). This assertion could be valid in the case of Boko-Haram terror activities in many parts of Northern Nigeria. A number of studies have related the increased violence in Nigeria to government apathy, inaction and general economic mismanagement. Ali (2002) observes that limited government control on the proliferation of religious sects that instigate violence caused increased religious violence in Nigeria. Similarly, Zanye, et al (2013) insisted that economic deprivation, marginalisation created by poor governance fuel terrorism in contemporary Nigeria. The authors drew their conclusion using prevalence of corrupt practices to explain the menace of violence in Niger-delta and Boko-Haram terror activities. However, they made no attempt to show either causation or correlation using any scientific measure.

Krueger and Maleckova (2003), however, found that there is no causal link between poverty, education, and terrorism. This finding has been corroborated by Stern (2011) which found that limited knowledge of religion, group dynamics and influence couple with economic factors motivate terror activities. Similarly, Mehmoud (2013) found no evidence that poverty related conditions led to terrorism. This is because terrorists tend to received higher education (and income) than an average. It is therefore more practical to conclude that terrorist activities flourish in radicalised societies that tend to lend some degree of apathy, sympathy or support. Nigeria is increasingly becoming a safe-haven for domestic terrorist activities even though there is still no clear indication that the country is a breeding ground for international terrorism (Ogundiya, 2010).

The local and international dimensions of insecurity call for proactive approaches for managing preventive and recovery efforts. Governments and organisations are expected to develop and maintain programmes for prevention and protection of the public. This requires the development of emergency plan, facilities, equipment staffing and building capacity to anticipate and effectively respond to any potential or actual threat to the community (McLoughlin, 1985). The perception of risk of the community can also be influenced by supportive social network, increased resources and household preparedness (Patterson et al, 2010). In the same vein, the United States Department of Homeland Security (2007) maintained that in order to effectively implement policies towards preventing, protecting against and responding to and recovery from terror, there is the need for proper planning, organisation and leadership, personnel, training and exercises, evaluation and corrective measures. In general, terrorism as a major security concern in Nigeria and beyond has multiple causes. Addressing these causes, however, requires a holistic and collaborative approach as governments can only do so much.

SUSTAINABLE SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Today, social organisations are set up to find innovative solutions to complex social problems. The insecurity problem faced by Nigeria is currently addressed through various social networks and arrangements. The conventional wisdom in Nigeria is that the prevailing insecurity is attributable to poverty, unemployment, lack of education and injustices committed by political leaders over the years. Thus, social organisations are set up to mitigate injustices if the problem is injustice; they feed the hungry if the problem is hunger; they educate the illiterate if the problem is education and so on (London and Morfopoulos, 2010). These organisations are not satisfied with the status quo and are always trying to create social change (Leadbeater, 1997; Mair and Marti, 2006; Zahra et al 2008). There are various organisations in Nigeria that attempt to help towards regaining peace and security. Specifically, we examined three important players that have created unique approaches to promoting peace and security.

Peace Initiative Network

Peace Initiative Network is a voluntary nongovernmental, non profit, non partisan in politics and religion, charitable organization (based in Kano, Nigeria) dedicated to the promotion of peace, unity and harmony in Nigeria, Africa and among the nations and regions of the world. It was established in 2004. The organization functions as a catalyst for public policy input. The main mission of the organization is to prevent, manage violent conflict through public enlightenment and sensitization in Nigeria and globally. PIT aims to promote peace, conflict resolution and harmony through research, charitable disbursements and the support of voluntary humanitarian services. The Initiative focuses on three areas: Peace Building, Democracy/Good Governance, and Development. It is set to advance the promotion of peace, democracy and socio-economic development in Nigeria.

Since its inception, PIT has committed itself to conflict mitigation and development in Nigeria and beyond through participatory research, capacity development i.e. experiential workshop and seminars, advocacy, sensitization/awareness campaigns, networking and coalition building among stakeholders such as relevant research institutes, civil society organizations and media outreach.

The Initiative is working to realize the value, principles and goals contained in the United Nations' Millennium Summit Declaration: peace, security, development, poverty eradication, human right, democracy, governance, protecting the vulnerable and meeting the special needs of developing countries especially Africa. The organization's strategy is reaching people in the community to promote goodwill and coexistence through organizing and hosting periodic seminars, workshops and public enlightenment campaigns. It adopts partnership/participatory approach in all its interventions and activities. Its major partners are the British Council, Institute for Democracy in South Africa (IDASA, Nigeria), Generations for Peace, Jordan, Alliance for Peace Building and Veil Breakers Initiative. PIN's main funding/revenue source include donations from individuals and institutions, funds from donor/development agencies and consultancy services – research and training.

The organization has achieved a lot in the area of creating awareness on the use of non violent strategies as a proactive tool and response to conflict through peace education and sports programs. These programs are designed for young people in schools and youth in communities to promote peaceful and harmonious coexistence in northern Nigeria. The Initiative also set up a 'Peace Club' which inculcates the values of mutual respect, fairness, teamwork, discipline and tolerance in the minds of youth from different

backgrounds. Currently, the Club has more than 8000 members in 60 schools and colleges in four states in Nigeria (Kano, Gombe, Plateau and Kaduna). They have been able to promote peace, unity and harmonious coexistence among diverse ethnic groups of youth in the region. The major factor militating against the organisation is lack of funding. They were unable to broaden their funding drive and this limits their activities from reaching other communities.

Inter-faith Mediation Centre

Interfaith Mediation Centre (IMC) is a non-governmental, non-partisan, not for profit making, faith-based organization that was established in 1995. It is dedicated to promoting peace and good governance through capacity building, conflict resolution and mediation etc. using faith based approach. It is an NGO that is committed to ending the security challenges in Northern Nigeria. It provides tools and resources that support effective and responsive government including consulting, facilitation, mediation and training. IMC help public entities, including state agencies, development partners with integrated conflict management systems, in order to improve their ability to deal with conflict. It creates a peaceful society through non-violent and strategic engagements in Nigeria and beyond. They use the holy Books - Quran and the Bible – as the common bound the human family.

The organization has worked with more than 50 communities in Kaduna, Plateau, Kano and Bauchi and reached over 4 million people directly with conflict and peace prevention programmes. It uses multimedia mediums like radio/TV broadcasts, documentary films of the Kaduna crisis (entitled the Imam and a Pastor) shown as entry points to show religious harmony, peaceful coexistence and reconciliation. This approach has served the purpose of providing open-democratic spaces for aggrieved parties to share their grievances openly and honestly and proffer local solutions to issues without having solutions imposed on them from 'outsiders'. This has accorded the IMC an international recognition as a result of which where they were invited to the University of Birmingham, Maryland University etc. and other international conference on interfaith dialogue in Cairo-Egypt, Berlin-Germany, United Kingdom, USA, Switzerland, etc. to share lessons on the success of their approach.

The Centre has made a landmark achievement by facilitating the Kaduna Peace Declaration of religious leaders, signed by 22 senior Christian and Muslims religious in August 2002 after the Sharia crisis in 2000 and the Miss World Riots in 2002. Kaduna enjoyed nearly a decade of peace after such declaration. They also facilitated the Yelwan Shendam Peace Affirmation in August 2005 in Plateau state to bridge the divisions and foster commitment to peaceful coexistence in the region. One of the organization's challenges is that it depends so much on its founders for funding and support and does not have the capacity to transfer its skills to like-minded organizations. Similarly, there is the need to develop the capacity of the stakeholders in fund raising and management.

Civilian Joint Task Force (Civilian JTF)

The hardship caused by the declaration of state of emergency in Borno state by the Nigerian federal government due to the worsening security situation, coupled with the alleged brutality being perpetrated by the Joint Task Force troops, prompted youth to set up the Civilian JTF. It is believed that hundreds of innocent youths have been detained in connection with the insurgency. The Group is a nongovernmental one but is committed to ending the insurgency that has wreaked a lot of havoc to the people in their respective communities.

It started in Hausari area of Maiduguri where, with increased pressure from security operatives and merciless attacks by Boko Haram, the youth mobilized themselves and decided to thenceforth apprehend any insurgent who crosses the area for robbery or the usual drive - by bombings or shootings. Within few days of its set-up, hundreds of youths in and around Maiduguri volunteered to join the group to assist Nigerian troops to end the insurgency. The activities of the Civilian JTF were not motivated by any financial gains or benefits but by the desire to solve the security problem that engulfed the area.

The Civilian JTF is comprised of as many as five hundred young Muslims from Borno state. They joined the group to avenge the deaths of their family members at the hands of Boko Haram, stop the atrocities of Boko Haram, and save their economy from being further destroyed. The group is being seen as an effective campaign against the menace of Boko haram. They have been able to significantly lessen the activities of Boko Haram members particularly in Maiduguri. The advantage the members of the Civilian JTF have is that they speak the local language (Hausa, Kanuri and Shuwa Arabic) and also understand the local culture, religion and geography. This enables them to easily identify the dreaded Sect members for arrest by security operatives. However, the major challenge of the Civilian JTF is that they are not well organized because they did not receive any special training to be able to face the Boko Haram members. In addition, they do not have the capacity and exposure to relevant methods of engagement; rather they use crude local methods and arms in confronting the insurgents. This greatly impedes the success of their campaign against Boko Haram Sect.

CONCLUSION

It is apparent that insecurity is a manifestation of unemployment, poverty, illiteracy and perceived injustice arising from corruption and weak governance that is prevalent in Nigeria. So, the most effective approach to overcoming insurgency in Nigeria is to holistically address development issues and improve governance. In complementing these efforts, innovative social/community interventions are critical. We found that even with the poor organisation, lack of funding and limited capacity to initiate and execute high impact innovative social interventions, the activities of NGOs have raised people's hope and improved the quality of life in localities that are most hit by the menace of insurgency. With increased scholarly works on the subject of social entrepreneurship and deliberate efforts to raise the capacity of stakeholders, NGOs will be better positioned to employ innovative methods in solving or drastically reducing the problem of insecurity bedevilling the north. In this respect, the Nigerian government should create a mechanism for integrating relevant social groups that demonstrated genuine and creative solutions in its wider efforts to address the menace of insurgency in Nigeria. Similarly, community leaders and religious organisations are expected to partner with local social groups in order to ensure effective harmonisation of community efforts in bringing the insurgency to an end. Lastly, the success stories and activities of NGOs and other social groups should be publicized and recognised so as to encourage other individuals to follow suit.

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